

Seamlessness Policy Group Student Advising

Background

Student advising is critical to the effectiveness of academic policies administered by the Council on Postsecondary Education. Research shows that academic advising plays an important role in the retention and graduation of students. As the “cornerstone of student retention,” academic advising is closely correlated with student satisfaction, effective career and education planning, student use of support services, student-faculty contact, and student mentoring. The Council supports initiatives to improve student advising and create a collaborative network of advisors across the state.

- Kentucky’s eight public universities participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement in 2001 and 2003 as part of a consortium organized by the Council. Kentucky is one of the few states using NSSE as a statewide accountability measure. The Council uses results from the NSSE to gauge progress on two of its key indicators—undergraduate student experience and civic engagement. Preliminary analysis of 2003 NSSE results (attached) suggest progress has been made in academic and career advising. The rating first-year students assigned to the quality of academic advising improved at seven of Kentucky’s eight public universities between 2001 and 2003. Ratings assigned by senior students improved at four institutions.
- 2003 Student Advising Conference: The 2001 NSSE results indicated students’ low satisfaction with academic and career advising was of particular concern. In response, the Council organized its February 2003 student advising conference, “Promoting Student Success through Advising.” The conference offered opportunities for teams from each of Kentucky’s public postsecondary institutions to learn about new initiatives to provide student support and improve retention and job placement.
- UCAN: The purpose of UCAN, funded by a \$400,000 FIPSE grant, is to increase Kentuckians’ access to, participation in, and transfer within Kentucky’s postsecondary education system by creating a statewide network of voice and electronic call centers linked to the KYVU call center. The northern Kentucky region is the site of the first pilot project, with participation by local school districts, community colleges, and adult learning centers as well as the Frankfort- and Lexington-based state agencies. Two additional pilots are under development in the eastern and southwestern regions of the state.
- Go Higher Kentucky Web portal: The Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority, with assistance from the Council, the independent institutions, and the Kentucky Department of Education, began planning a comprehensive Web portal in 2002-03 www.GoHigherKy.org. It will provide a powerful recruitment and enrollment tool for Kentucky’s postsecondary institutions. Kentuckians will be able to readily locate information on adult and distance education, financial aid, and career planning. In short, the site will provide nearly everything a student, parent, or counselor needs to plan, apply, and pay for

college. UCAN will be linked to the Web portal to address questions and provide additional information as needed by those using the portal.

- The Governor's Minority Student College Preparation Program was established in fiscal year 1986-87, to provide academic enrichment programs for under-prepared minority students to encourage them to successfully transition from middle to high school, as well as enable them to enroll and persist in postsecondary education. The eight public universities and 10 institutions of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System assist the Council in supporting these efforts. GMSCPP directors provide academic advising by offering support in the areas of English, science, math, reading, computer technology, communication, research, academic counseling, and tutoring. Thousands of students have been served since the inception of the GMSCPP.

While the Council continues to support the activities listed above, there are still several issues for the Council to consider.

What the Council Can Do

- Should the Council use our institutional benchmarks for gauging the effectiveness of retention and graduation efforts as an indirect measure of advising? Can we use these to assess retention efforts that focus specifically on minority or under prepared students?
- Should the Council take a more active role in promoting the development of promotion and tenure systems that reward good advising?
- How should the Council recognize best practice programs that help minority and under prepared students transition through the postsecondary system and help replicate this model across the system?
- How can the Council help to improve the quality of the academic programs and professional development opportunities that train middle and high school counselors?
- How can the Council support and encourage doctoral programs that prepare future faculty to be better advisors to college students? How can the Council guarantee these programs train faculty and advisors to be sensitive to the needs of minority, under prepared, and low-income students?
- What can the Council do to guarantee quality advising of adult education students to prepare them for college enrollment?
- What would be the most effective route to continuing a statewide focus on advising? (e.g., an annual advising conference, incorporate advising into the annual faculty development conference, and incorporate topic into the chair/dean leadership workshop)? What advising issues should we highlight in this effort?

What the Council Can Do in Partnership with Other Agencies

Advising takes place at all stages in educational development. The high school Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) assists middle and high school students in educational planning, but to date has not been used widely by Kentucky's schools. This advising tool has the potential to

be an effective *college* planning and promotion tool for Kentucky students. While the Kentucky Department of Education is a key leader in the development and implementation of the IGP, the Council may want to consider its role in promoting use of the IGP as a *college* planning tool, rather than the more narrow focus on high school graduation requirements.

Attachment

NSSE, 2003 Results.

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 2003 Results

Overall how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?

Institution		2003 Average Rating ¹	Kentucky Public Institutions ²	Difference Between Institution Rating and Kentucky Public Institutions Rating	Statistical Significance ³	Carnegie ⁴	Difference Between Institution Rating and Carnegie Rating	Statistical Significance	NSSE ⁵	Difference Between Institution Rating and NSSE Rating	Statistical Significance
EKU	1st Yr.	2.98	2.96			2.97			3.01		
	Senior	2.87	2.82			2.90			2.93		
KSU	1st Yr.	2.67	2.97	-.37	***	2.97	-.37	***	3.01	-.41	***
	Senior	2.79	2.82			2.90			2.93		
MoSU	1st Yr.	3.00	2.96			2.97			3.01		
	Senior	2.84	2.82			2.90			2.93		
MuSu	1st Yr.	3.14	2.93	.25	**	2.97	.21	**	3.01	.16	*
	Senior	3.12	2.78	.37	***	2.90	.24	**	2.93	.21	**
NKU	1st Yr.	3.07	2.95			2.97			3.01		
	Senior	2.79	2.83			2.90			2.93	-.16	*
UK	1st Yr.	3.05	2.95			2.91	.16	**	3.01		
	Senior	2.71	2.83	-.14	*	2.71			2.93	-.24	***
UL	1st Yr.	2.82	2.98			2.92			3.01	-.23	*
	Senior	2.66	2.85	-.20	*	2.71			2.83	-.29	***
WKU	1st Yr.	2.78	3.01	-.28	***	2.97	-.23	**	3.01	-.28	***
	Senior	2.72	2.72			2.90	-.20	**	2.93	-.23	**

1. 1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Excellent

2. Average rating of Kentucky public institutions. Score excludes the institution being compared.

3. * p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 - The smaller the significance level, the smaller the likelihood the difference is due to chance.

4. Average rating of institutions in same Carnegie classification.

5. Average rating of all institutions (public and private) participating in NSSE.